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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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INFO AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179390

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MT

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN DIALOGUE ON ASSISTANCE TO MALTA

REFERENCE: STATE 174107

1. REFTEL OUTLINES AMBASSADOR LAINGEN'S CONCERN WITH THE POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS DRIFT AND CONFUSION IN EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO MALTA'S ASSISTANCE DEMANDS. DEPARTMENT CONCURS IN THIS ANALYSIS. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT ANY RESPONSE TO MINTOFF, AS LONG AS IT IS PROMPT, DEFINITE, AND COORDINATED AMONG THE FRENCH, GERMANS, AND ITALIANS, IS PREFERABLE, WHATEVER ITS TERMS, TO THE PRESENT AMBIGUITY.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ITALIANS SHARE OUR CONCERN WITH THE
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LACK OF DEFINITE MOTION AND HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN WITH FRG AND FRENCH RE A RENEWAL OF CONVERSATIONS ON SUBJECT.

3. DEPARTMENT WISHES TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT ITALIAN EFFORTS TO GET BALL ROLLING WITHOUT, HOWEVER, USG GETTING OUT FRONT. THEREFORE ACTION ADDRESSEES REQUESTED TO APPROACH HOST GOVERNMENT AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL CONVEYING

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US VIEWS AS FOLLOWS:

A. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO CLEARLY DEFINED EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO MINTOFF'S REQUEST FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS IN THE DIALOGUE INDICATE THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION WITH RESPECT TO THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE CONTRIBUTORS. EACH APPEARS TO ASSUME THAT ONE OF THE OTHERS IS PLAYING A PRIMARY ROLE AND THAT THEIR OWN ROLE WILL BE VERY MINOR. IF NO COORDINATED RESPONSE IS MADE TO MINTOFF'S DEMANDS, THERE IS A DANGER THAT MINTOFF WILL FEEL PRESSURED BY HIS RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO FULFILL HIS THREAT TO ALIGN HIMSELF WITH THE RADICAL ARABS.

B. OF DOLS 30 MILLION MINTOFF SEEKING, THE FRENCH, THE GERMANS, AND THE ITALIANS SHOULD DETERMINE WHAT PORTION OF THIS AMOUNT EACH WILLING TO GIVE AND ON WHAT TERMS. A DEFINITE OFFER COULD BE MADE TO MINTOFF THEREAFTER. (MALTESE MAINTAIN THAT NO ONE HAS TOLD THEM THAT THEIR REQUEST IS UNREALISTIC AND THAT THEY ARE COMPLETELY IN THE DARK RE EUROPEAN INTENTIONS.)

C. WE BELIEVE FORMAL COORDINATED OFFER, WHATEVER ITS TERMS, WOULD CLEAR UP SOME OF THE CONFUSION AND REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE MALTESE YIELDING TO THEIR OWN RHETORIC.
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5. FOR ROME: WE APPRECIATE ITALIAN EFFORTS TO RENEW THE DIALOGUE ON ASSISTANCE TO MALTA. CHRISTOPHER

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